

Teaching the Liturgical Year

LESSONS
for January
2021

SOPHIA
INSTITUTE
FOR TEACHERS

Teaching *the* Liturgical Year

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Teaching *the* Liturgical Year

**Lessons for
Middle and Upper Elementary**

The Visit of the Magi

(Middle and Upper Elementary)

January 3, 2021 – The Epiphany of the Lord

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage, the Magi visit the infant Jesus to bring Him gifts and honor Him. In this lesson, students will learn about the three gifts of the Magi and consider what sort of gift they can bring to the Christ Child.

Directions

- A. Have your students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions.
- B. Review and discuss the answers when they have completed the focus questions.
- C. Sing the Christmas carol "We Three Kings" together as a class and then look at the sacred art and read the reflection. A recording of the carol can be found at the following link: [SophiaOnline.Org/WeThreeKings](https://www.sophiaonline.org/we-there-kings).
- D. Have students answer the reflection questions and call on students to share and discuss their responses with the class.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Magi from the east. They were looking for the newborn king of the Jews to pay him homage.
2. They were the ones currently in power. The birth of a new king threatened their power and control over the people.
3. Bethlehem.
4. Herod asked the Magi to search for the child and bring him word when they had found Him. Herod said he wanted them to do this so he could pay homage. He likely did not want to do this in truth, but rather sought to kill the newborn King because he threatened Herod's rule.
5. A star which came to rest over the place where the child was.
6. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

7. They had been warned not to do so in a dream.

Sunday Readings

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 2:1–12: The Visit of the Magi

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.” Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them

the time of the Star’s appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.” After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

Focus Questions

1. Who came to Jerusalem? What were they looking for? Why?
2. Why do you think King Herod, the priests, and the scribes were troubled to hear of the birth of a new king of the Jews?
3. Where did the prophecy say the king of the Jews would be born?
4. What did King Herod ask the Magi to do? What reason did Herod give for this request? Do you think Herod was being honest about what he planned to do? Why or why not?
5. What led the Magi to the newborn king?
6. What gifts did the Magi give?
7. Why did the Magi not return to King Herod?

The Gifts of the Magi

Directions: Sing together the Christmas Carol “We Three Kings” as a class. The Three Kings is another title for the Magi. Afterwards look at the painting *The Adoration of the Magi* by Matthias Stom and read the reflection on the gifts of the Magi. Then answer the questions.

We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar.
Field and fountain, moor and
mountain
Following yonder star.

*Chorus: O Star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright.
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy Perfect Light.*



Born a King on Bethlehem’s plain
Gold I bring to crown Him again.
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign. **R.**

Frankincense to offer have I
Incense owns a Deity nigh.
Prayer and praising, all men raising
Worship Him, God most high. **R.**

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Breathes of life of gathering gloom.
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb. **R.**

Glorious now behold Him arise
King and God and Sacrifice.
Alleluia, Alleluia.
Earth to heav’n replies. **R.**

Reflection on the Three Gifts

The tradition of the Church says that the gifts of the Three Kings hold a particular meaning or symbolism. Gold is precious, a worthy gift to pay tribute to a king. However, the meaning of frankincense and myrrh are more mysterious because we don't typically use these two perfumes or oils anymore.

Many ancient cultures used frankincense during their religious ceremonies. It is an aromatic resin used in incense, and the priests of the Jewish Temple used frankincense to incense the Tabernacle where the Holy of Holies was kept. Inside the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod, and a pot of manna, until the Ark of the Covenant was lost in the Babylonian Exile.

Myrrh is a gum or resin that in ancient times was very valuable, worth even more than gold. While it too was used as incense and for medicine, it was also used as an anointing oil to embalm dead bodies. St. Augustine describes the symbolism of the three gifts this way: "Gold, as paid to a mighty King; frankincense, as offered to God; myrrh, as to one who is to die for the sins of all."

1. Think about the meaning of each the three Magi's gift. Use the carol and the reflection to describe how each of the three gifts was a fitting gift to give to the Christ child.

Gold:

Frankincense:

Myrrh:

2. Which Magi is holding which gift in the picture?

3. Look at the posture and expressions of the three Magi in the picture. What attitude do the three Magi have as they give their gifts to Jesus?

4. Why do you think the boy on the right side of the picture is holding the Magi's crown?

5. The Christmas season still continues in the Church! In what way can we imitate the three Magi and give a special gift to Jesus?

The Baptism of the Lord

(Middle and Upper Elementary)

January 10, 2021 – The Baptism of the Lord

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage, John the Baptist foretells of the coming Messiah who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He then baptizes Jesus, upon whom the Holy Spirit descends and comes to rest, while the Father proclaims Him to be His beloved Son. In this lesson, students will consider the meaning of Christ's Baptism and the invitation to all of us it extends.

Directions

- A. Have your students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions.
- B. Review and discuss the answers when they have completed the focus questions.
- C. Have students complete the **Why was Jesus Baptized** activity and complete the focus questions. Review and discuss the answers when finished.
- D. Finally, have your students read the excerpt on Baptism from the *Summa Theologica* and answer the reflection questions.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. He prophesied that one mightier than himself was coming; one whose sandals he was not worthy to loosen.
2. John told them that he was baptizing them with water while one mightier than he is coming to baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire.
3. "You are my beloved son; with You I am well pleased."

Why was Jesus Baptized?

1. Jesus' acceptance and inauguration of His mission as God's suffering servant.
2. To be numbered among sinners.

3. Jesus is already “the Lamb of God,” He is already anticipating the “baptism” of His bloody death, and He is already coming to fulfill all righteousness and submit Himself to the Father’s will.
4. The Son’s acceptance.
5. The Holy Spirit rests upon Jesus, who will now be the source of the Spirit for all mankind. The descent of the Son of God and the Holy Spirit is a prelude to the New Creation.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 1:7–11: The Baptism of the Lord

And this is what he proclaimed: “One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the holy Spirit.” It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee

and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

Focus Questions

1. Who did John the Baptist say was coming after him? What would he do?
2. What happened when Jesus came out of the water?
3. What did the voice from the heavens say?

Why Was Jesus Baptized?

Directions: Read the excerpt from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and respond to the Focus Questions.

***Catechism of the Catholic Church* no. 536**

The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's suffering Servant. He allows himself to be numbered among sinners; he is already "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world". Already he is anticipating the "baptism" of his bloody death. Already he is coming to "fulfill all righteousness", that is, he is submitting himself entirely to his Father's will: out of love he consents to this baptism of death for the remission of our sins. The Father's voice responds to the Son's acceptance, proclaiming his entire delight in his Son. The Spirit whom Jesus possessed in fullness from his conception comes to "rest on him". Jesus will be the source of the Spirit for all mankind. At his baptism "the heavens were opened" - the heavens that Adam's sin had closed - and the waters were sanctified by the descent of Jesus and the Spirit, a prelude to the new creation.

Focus Questions

1. What is signified by Jesus' Baptism?

2. In His Baptism, what does Jesus allow of Himself?

3. What three things is Jesus already signifying or doing at His baptism?

4. What is the Father's voice responding to?

5. How are Jesus and the Holy Spirit linked at His baptism? What is their descent a prelude to?

Summa Theologica, Part III, Q. 39, art. 1

It was fitting for Christ to be baptized. First, because, as Ambrose says on Lk. 3:21: "Our Lord was baptized because He wished, not to be cleansed, but to cleanse the waters, that, being purified by the flesh of Christ that knew no sin, they might have the virtue of baptism"; and, as Chrysostom says, "that He might bequeath the sanctified waters to those who were to be baptized afterwards."

Reflection Questions

1. How does Christ's reception of Baptism differ from our reception of Baptism?

2. Does the passage above change the way you think about Christ's baptism? How?

3. How can we recollect our own baptism and the new life it has given us each and every day?

The First Disciples (Middle and Upper Elementary)

January 17, 2021 – Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage, John the Baptist introduces his followers to Jesus, whom he proclaims to be the Lamb of God. John's followers immediately begin to follow Jesus and become His first disciples. In this lesson students will contemplate Jesus' question to these first disciples, "What are you looking for?" and what it means for their own lives today.

Directions

- A. Have your students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions.
- B. Review and discuss the answers when they have completed the focus questions.
- C. Have your students respond to the reflection questions on the **What Are You Looking For?** activity. You may have students work individually to write their answers or have them discuss the questions with a partner or in groups.
- D. If time allows, conduct a class discussion about the reflection questions. Help your students recognize that Jesus is the answer to the question He asks. Ultimately, we are all looking for Him, for the salvation that He offers to us, and for the love of the Father we experience as His sons and daughters.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Lamb of God.
2. They immediately began to follow Jesus.
3. "What are you looking for?" They answered, "Where are you staying?"
4. "Come and you will see." He invites them to come and see where He is staying.
5. They stayed with Jesus.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of John 1:35–42: The First Disciples

John was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God.” The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” — which translated means Teacher —, “where

are you staying?” He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they went and saw where Jesus was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus.

Focus Questions

1. What title did John the Baptist give to Jesus when he saw Jesus walking by?
2. What did the two disciples of John do when they heard what John had said?
3. What did Jesus ask the disciples? How did they answer Him?
4. What invitation did Jesus make to the disciples?
5. What did the disciples end up doing that day?

What Are You Looking For?

Directions: Read the brief reflection on the Gospel reading. Then respond to the reflection questions below.

When John the Baptist called Jesus the Lamb of God, he was calling to mind the first Passover in the book of Exodus. During the Passover, God commanded the Israelites to sacrifice a year-old, unblemished male lamb in order to be saved from the final plague of death. Only then would they be set free from centuries of slavery in Egypt. In this Gospel story, John was proclaiming that Jesus was the sacrificial lamb for a New Passover, one that would save God’s people from sin and spiritual death. Jesus accomplished this with His Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

Here, at the beginning of His work of salvation, Jesus asked His first disciples a seemingly simple question: “What are you looking for?” Jesus asks us this same question today. Jesus implies with this question that He is the answer. Just as in the first Passover the Israelites were looking for salvation, Jesus knows that, whether we know it or not, we too are looking for the same thing: salvation. And He offers us exactly what we are looking for.

Reflection Questions:

1. Describe a time when you traveled somewhere. Where were you going? Why? What was it like preparing for your journey? What it was like when you were traveling? How did it feel once you had arrived at your destination?

2. When we begin any journey, in a sense, we are looking for something: an endpoint, or a destination. In this Gospel story, we see the first people begin their journey as disciples of Jesus. What do you think they were looking for?

3. We, too, are disciples of Jesus. All of us are at different stages in our journey of faith. What are we looking for when we follow Jesus?

4. In what way does Jesus' life answer the question, "What are you looking for?" Is His answer different than what the disciples might have thought it would be?

5. What are you looking for in your relationship with Jesus? How can you better respond to Jesus' answer to this question in your own life?

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry (Middle and Upper Elementary)

January 24, 2021 – Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage, Jesus begins His Galilean ministry by calling the first Apostles. These men leave their old lives behind and immediately follow Christ. In this lesson, students will compare two images of sacred art and reflect on Jesus' call to the first Apostles.

Directions

- A. Have your students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions.
- B. Review and discuss the answers when they have completed the focus questions.
- C. In groups, have your students reflect on the paintings using the discussion questions from **Fishers of Men**.
- D. Call on groups to share their insights into the paintings and the Gospel story.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Galilee. He proclaimed the Gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel."
2. Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew. They were fishermen. Jesus said He would make them "fishers of men."
3. James and John. They were also fishermen.
4. They all immediately left what they were doing and followed Him.

Fishers of Men

1. Accept reasoned answers.
2. Jesus is inviting Simon (Peter) and Andrew to come follow Him. Simon and Andrew are fishing and contemplating Jesus' invitation.

3. Accept reasoned answers.
4. Jesus is extending an invitation to follow Him.
5. Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew.
6. Accept reasoned answers.
7. Priests and bishops – the successors to the Apostles.
8. Ordinary people, sinners in need of salvation.
9. Accept reasoned answers about why the rainbow is in the sky. Perhaps it is meant to call to mind the story of the Great Flood and Noah's ark, which saved the human race from being destroyed by the Flood (and the wickedness of sin). In much the same way, the Church is a life raft offering salvation to sinners.
10. Accept reasoned answers.

Reflection Question:

Accept reasoned answers.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 1:14–20: The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make

you fishers of men.” Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

Focus Questions

1. Where did Jesus go after John the Baptist had been arrested? What did He proclaim there?
2. Who were the first two Apostles Jesus called? What was their profession? What did Jesus say He would make them?
3. Who were the other brothers Jesus called to be His Apostles? What was their profession?
4. How did the men whom Jesus called to be Apostles in this Gospel respond to Jesus' call?

Fishers of Men

Directions: Reflect on the two paintings and discuss the questions.

1. Take a moment to observe the first painting, which is called *Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew* and was painted by Ducio di Buonsegna in 1310. What do you first notice about this painting? How does it make you feel?
2. What is happening in this painting?
3. Re-read the Gospel story from this week. How does this painting illustrate the story?
4. What does Jesus' posture and gesture suggest He is doing?



5. How are the two men responding to Jesus?
6. Now take a look at the painting on the next page. It is called *Fishers of Men* and was painted by Adriaen van de Venne in 1614. What do you first notice about this painting? How does it make you feel?
7. Who are the men in the boats? What are they doing?
8. Who might the people on the shores be?
9. Why do you think there is a rainbow in the sky? What story from Scripture does this make you think of? Why do you think the artist chose to include this detail?
10. How are these two paintings related to one another?

Reflection Question:

If Jesus came to you today and asked you to leave everything behind to follow Him, how would you respond? Would it be easy or difficult to do as He asked? Why?



The Cure of a Demoniac (Middle and Upper Elementary)

January 31, 2021 – Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

Jesus performed many miracles during His time here on earth. Of all of the types of miracles He performed, exorcisms (casting out of demons) perhaps most dramatically show Jesus' true power over evil. In this lesson, students will examine Christ's power over evil and that which would harm us.

Directions

- A. Have students read the Gospel passage for the week and complete the focus questions.
- B. Review and discuss the answers when complete.
- C. Have students read the prayer excerpt from the rite of Exorcism and write a short reaction/reflection in response to it using the questions that follow it as a guide.
- D. When your students have finished, ask for volunteers to share and discuss their responses.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Because He taught as one having authority, and not as one of the scribes.
2. He had an unclean spirit.
3. "The Holy One of God."
4. Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to be quiet and to come out of the man. The unclean spirit obeyed. It convulsed and came out of the man with a loud cry.
5. Throughout the whole region of Galilee.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 1:21–28: The Cure of a Demoniac

Then they came to Capernaum, and on the sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and taught. The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. In their synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit; he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” Jesus

rebuked him and said, “Quiet! Come out of him!” The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him. All were amazed and asked one another, “What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him.” His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee.

Focus Questions

1. Why were the people in the synagogue astonished at Jesus’ teaching?
2. What did one of the men in the synagogue suffer from?
3. What did the unclean spirit say Jesus was?
4. What did Jesus command the unclean spirit to do, and what happened?
5. Where did Jesus’ fame spread?

Excerpt from the Rite of Exorcism

Directions: Read the following excerpt taken from the prayers a priest today would use to perform an exorcism. Then respond to the reflection questions.

Priest: Save your servant.

All: Who trusts in you, my God.

P: Let him (her) find in you, Lord, a fortified tower.

All: In the face of the enemy.

P: Let the enemy have no power over him (her).

All: And the son of iniquity be powerless to harm him (her).

P: Lord, send him (her) aid from your holy place.

All: And watch over him (her) from Sion.

P: Lord, heed my prayer.

All: And let my cry be heard by you.

P: The Lord be with you.

All: May He also be with you.

P: Let us pray.

God, whose nature is ever merciful and forgiving, accept our prayer that this servant of yours, bound by the fetters of sin, may be pardoned by your loving kindness.

Holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who once and for all consigned that fallen and apostate tyrant to the flames of hell, who sent your only-begotten Son into the world to crush that roaring lion; hasten to our call for help and snatch from ruination and from the clutches of the noonday devil this human being made in your image and likeness. Strike terror, Lord, into the beast now laying waste your vineyard. Fill your servants with courage to fight manfully against that reprobate dragon, lest he despise those who put their trust in you, and say with Pharaoh of old: "I know not

God, nor will I set Israel free.” Let your mighty hand cast him out of your servant, (The name of the person), so he may no longer hold captive this person whom it pleased you to make in your image, and to redeem through your Son; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Then the priest commands the demon as follows:

I command you, unclean spirit, whoever you are, along with all your minions now attacking this servant of God, by the mysteries of the incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the descent of the Holy Spirit, by the coming of our Lord for judgment, that you tell me by some sign your name, and the day and hour of your departure. I command you, moreover, to obey me to the letter, I who am a minister of God despite my unworthiness; nor shall you be emboldened to harm in any way this creature of God, or the bystanders, or any of their possessions.

The priest lays his hand on the head of the sick person, saying:

They shall lay their hands upon the sick and all will be well with them. May Jesus, Son of Mary, Lord and Savior of the world, through the merits and intercession of His holy apostles Peter and Paul and all His saints, show you favor and mercy.

All: Amen.

Reflection Questions

1. How do the prayers and words spoken in this rite relate back to the Gospel passage?

2. How do you see the authority Jesus had present through the Priest in these prayers?

3. What part of these prayers struck you the most? Why?

Teaching *the* Liturgical Year

Lessons for
Lower Elementary

The Epiphany of the Lord (Lower Elementary)

January 3, 2021 – The Epiphany of the Lord

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage, the Magi visit the infant Jesus to bring Him gifts and honor Him. In this lesson, students will learn about the three gifts of the Magi and consider what sort of gift they can bring to the Christ Child.

Directions

- A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.
- B. Sing the Christmas carol "We Three Kings" together as a class. A recording of the carol can be found at the following link: [Sophiaonline.org/WeThreeKings](https://sophiaonline.org/WeThreeKings).
- C. Have students answer the reflection questions and call on students to share and discuss their responses with the class.
- D. When they have finished, have students draw a picture in the box provided of the Magi presenting their gifts to the baby Jesus.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Magi from the east. They were looking for the newborn king of the Jews to pay him homage.
2. Bethlehem.
3. Herod asked the Magi to search for the child and bring him word when they had found Him. Herod said he wanted them to do this so he could pay homage.
4. A star which came to rest over the place where the child was.
5. They had been warned not to do so in a dream.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 2:1–12: The Visit of the Magi

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for

thus it has been written through the prophet: And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.” Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the Star’s appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.” After their

audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated

themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

Focus Questions

1. Who came to Jerusalem? Why?
2. Where did the prophecy say the king of the Jews would be born?
3. What did King Herod ask the Magi to do? Why?
4. What led the Magi to the newborn king?
5. Why did the Magi not return to King Herod?

The Gifts of the Magi

Directions: Sing together the Christmas Carol “We Three Kings” as a class. The Three Kings is another title for the Magi. Then answer the questions.

We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar.
Field and fountain, moor and mountain
Following yonder star.

*Chorus: O Star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright.
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy Perfect Light.*

Born a King on Bethlehem’s plain
Gold I bring to crown Him again.
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign. **R.**

Frankincense to offer have I
Incense owns a Deity nigh.
Prayer and praising, all men raising
Worship Him, God most high. **R.**

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Breathes of life of gathering gloom.
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb. **R.**

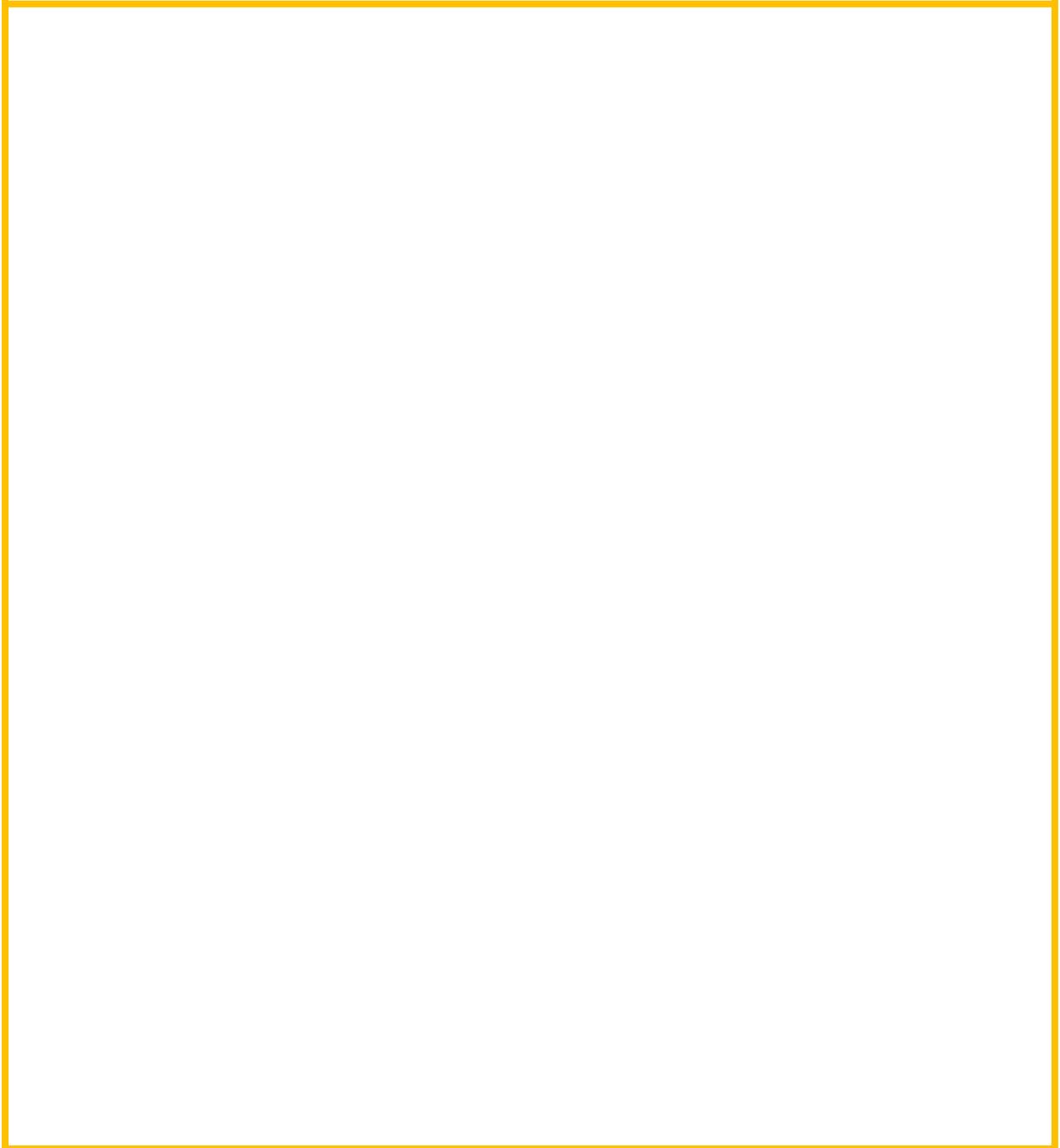
Glorious now behold Him arise
King and God and Sacrifice.
Alleluia, Alleluia.
Earth to heav'n replies. **R.**

Reflection Questions

1. The Magi traveled very far to see Jesus. Where can you go to visit Jesus in your life?

2. If you could visit the baby Jesus, what special gift would you bring to show he is King of Kings? Why?

Directions: In the box below draw a picture of yourself giving a gift to baby Jesus!



The Baptism of the Lord

(Lower Elementary)

January 10, 2021 – The Baptism of the Lord

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage, John the Baptist foretells of the coming Messiah who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He then baptizes Jesus, upon whom the Holy Spirit descends and comes to rest, while the Father proclaims Him to be His beloved Son. In this lesson, students will consider the meaning of Christ's Baptism and the invitation to all of us it extends.

Directions

- A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.
- B. Have students complete the **Why was Jesus Baptized** activity and complete the reflection question. Review and discuss students' answers to the question when finished. Guide a discussion about Jesus' baptism, emphasizing that He did not need to be baptized, for He is perfect, but He chose to undergo baptism as an example for us because He loves us.
- C. When they have finished, have them complete the **Baptism Spot-the-Difference** activity and answer the reflection question.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. He prophesied that one mightier than himself was coming; one whose sandals he was not worthy to loosen.
2. John told them that he was baptizing them with water while one mightier than he is coming to baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire.
3. "You are my beloved son; with You I am well pleased."

Baptism Spot-the-Difference



Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 1:7–11: The Baptism of the Lord

And this is what he proclaimed: “One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the holy Spirit.” It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of

Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

Focus Questions

1. Who did John the Baptist say was coming after him?
What would he do?
2. What happened when Jesus came out of the water?
3. What did the voice from the heavens say?

Why Was Jesus Baptized?

Directions: Read the following quote from St. Ambrose about Christ's Baptism. Then answer the reflection question.

"Our Lord was baptized because He wished, not to be cleansed, but to cleanse the waters, that, being purified by the flesh of Christ that knew no sin, they might have the virtue of baptism"
-St. Ambrose

Reflection Question:

How is Jesus' baptism different from our own baptisms?

Baptism Spot-the-Difference

Directions: Compare the painting of Christ's Baptism below with the painting on the next page. Can you spot 8 differences between them?





The First Disciples (Lower Elementary)

January 17, 2021 – Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage, John the Baptist introduces his followers to Jesus, whom he proclaims to be the Lamb of God. John's followers immediately begin to follow Jesus and become His first disciples. In this lesson students will contemplate Jesus' question to these first disciples, "What are you looking for?" and what it means for their own lives today.

Directions

- A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.
- B. Have students complete the **What Are You Looking For?** maze activity and then answer the reflection questions.
- C. When they have completed the reflection questions, have students share their answers with the class as you guide a discussion on how we can be disciples of Jesus and follow Him in our own lives.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Lamb of God.
2. They immediately began to follow Jesus.
3. "What are you looking for?" They answered, "Where are you staying?"
4. "Come and you will see." He invites them to come and see where He is staying.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of John 1:35–42: The First Disciples

John was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God.” The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” — which translated means Teacher —,

“where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they went and saw where Jesus was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus.

Focus Questions

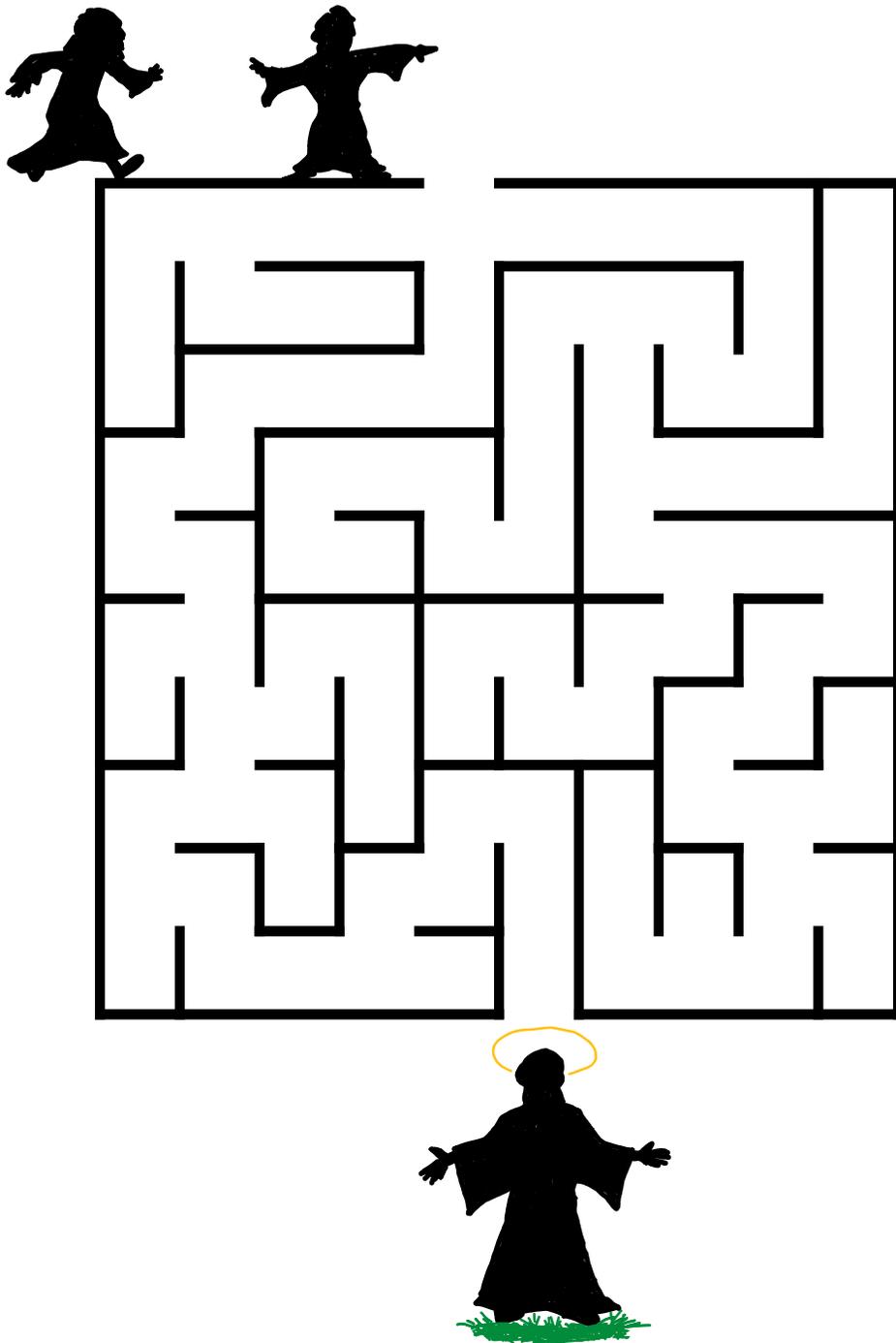
1. What title did John the Baptist give to Jesus when he saw Him?
2. What did the two disciples do when they heard what

John said?

3. What did Jesus ask the disciples? How did they answer Him?
4. What did Jesus invite the disciples to do?

What Are You Looking For?

Directions: Complete the maze below to help the disciples find Jesus! Then, answer the reflection questions that follow.



Reflection Questions

1. Describe a time when you traveled somewhere far away.

Where were you going? Why?

2. In this Gospel, why do you think the disciples decided to follow Jesus?

3. We are all disciples of Jesus. What can we do in our own lives to accept Jesus' invitation and follow Him?

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry (Lower Elementary)

January 24, 2021 – Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage, Jesus begins His Galilean ministry by calling the first Apostles. These men leave their old lives behind and immediately follow Christ. In this lesson, students will compare two images of sacred art and reflect on Jesus' call to the first Apostles.

Directions

- A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.
- B. Have your students complete the **Fishers of Men** code break activity.
- C. When they are finished, have your students draw a picture of Jesus calling Simon and Andrew as they cast their fishing nets. Then, have them answer the reflection question.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Galilee.
2. Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew, who were fishermen. Jesus said He would make them "fishers of men."
3. They all immediately left what they were doing and followed Him.

Code Break

Repent and believe

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 25:31–46: The Judgment of Nations

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make

you fishers of men.” Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

Focus Questions

1. Where did Jesus go after John the Baptist had been arrested?
2. Who were the first two Apostles Jesus called? What did Jesus say He would make them?
3. How did the men whom Jesus called to be Apostles respond to Jesus' call?

Fishers of Men Code Break

Directions: Crack the code to answer the question below!

What did Jesus call for people to do when He proclaimed the Gospel to them?

To and
 9 22 11 22 13 7

 .
 25 22 15 18 22 5 22

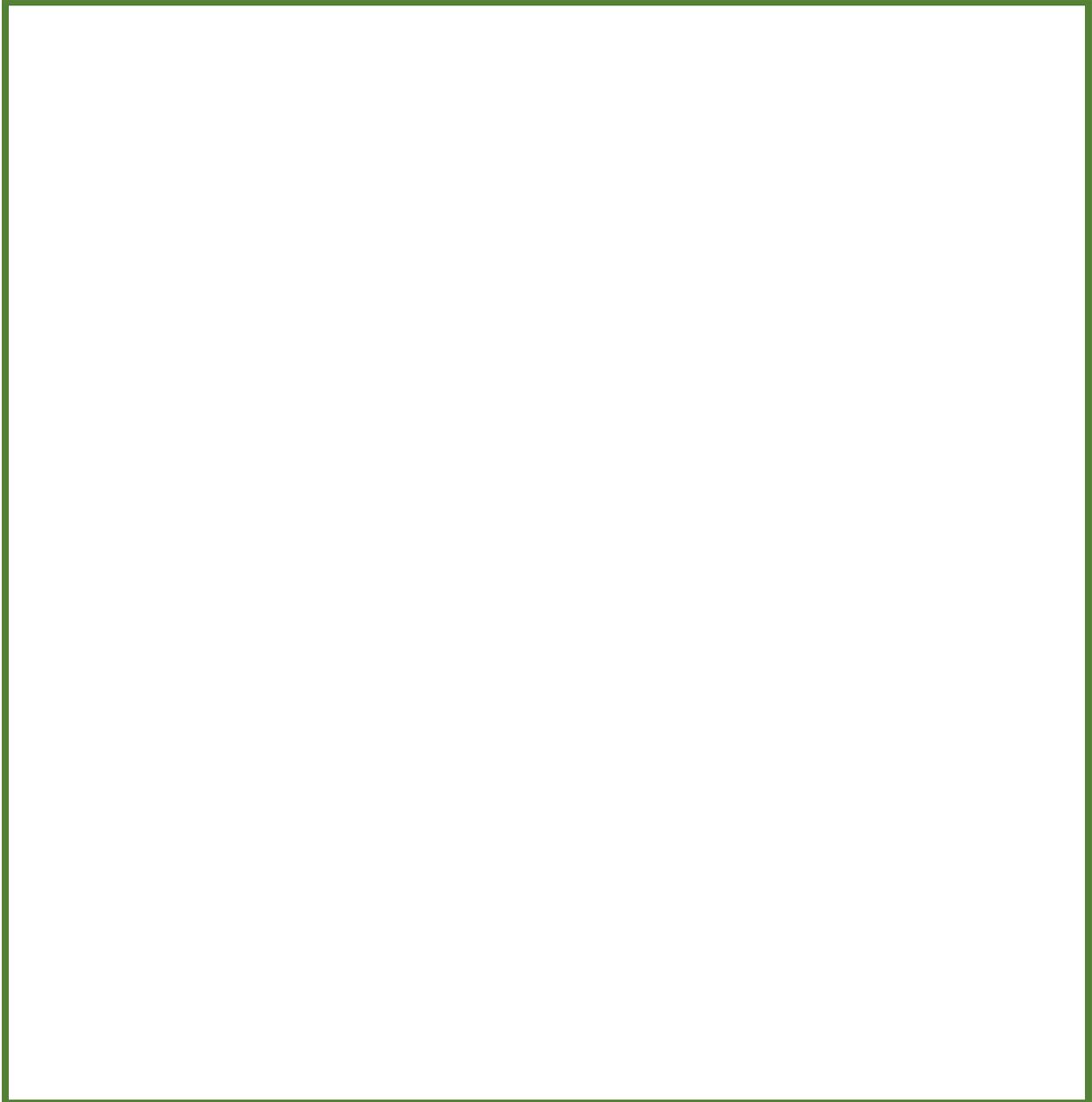
A=26, B=25, C=24, D=23, E=22, F=21, G=20,

H=19, I=18, J=17, K=16, L=15, M=14, N=13, O=12,

P=11, Q=10, R=9, S=8, T=7, U=6, V=5,

W=4, X=3, Y=2, Z=1

In the box below, draw a picture of Jesus calling Simon and Andrew as they cast their fishing nets.



Reflection Question:

What does it mean to be a fisher of men? Why do you think Jesus wants all His disciples to be fishers of men?

The Cure of a Demoniac (Lower Elementary)

January 31, 2021 – Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

Jesus performed many miracles during His time here on earth. Of all of the types of miracles He performed, exorcisms (casting out of demons) perhaps most dramatically show Jesus' true power over evil. In this lesson, students will examine Christ's power over evil and that which would harm us.

Directions

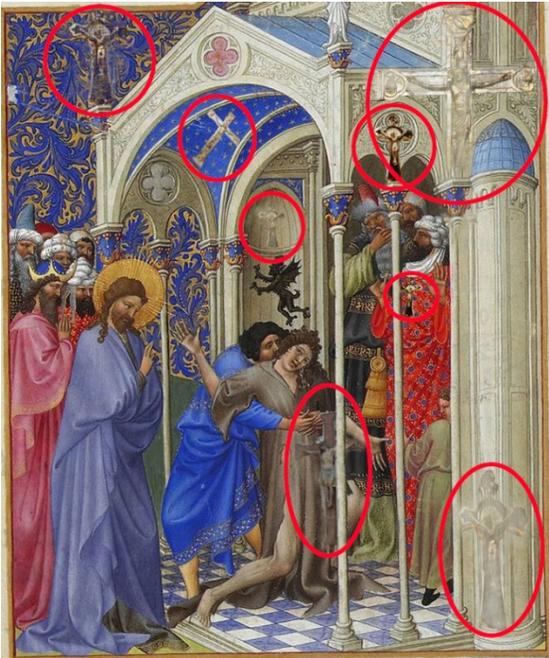
- A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.
- B. Have students complete the **Jesus Cures the Demoniac Search and Find** activity.
- C. When your students have finished, have them answer the reflection question. Ask for volunteers to share their answers with the class as you lead a short discussion on what it means to teach with authority.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. They were astonished because He taught as one having authority, and not as one of the scribes.
2. He had an unclean spirit.
3. "The Holy One of God."
4. Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to be quiet and to come out of the man. The unclean spirit obeyed. It convulsed and came out of the man with a loud cry.

Search and Find



Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 1:21–28: The Cure of a Demoniac

Then they came to Capernaum, and on the sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and taught. The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. In their synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit; he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who

you are—the Holy One of God!” Jesus rebuked him and said, “Quiet! Come out of him!” The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him. All were amazed and asked one another, “What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him.” His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee.

Focus Questions

1. What did the people in the synagogue think of Jesus’ teaching?

2. What did one of the men in the synagogue suffer from?
3. What did the unclean spirit say Jesus was?
4. What did Jesus command the unclean spirit to do? What happened?

Jesus Cures the Demoniac

Search and Find

Directions: Study the paintings below of Christ healing the Demoniac. Can you find 8 crucifixes hidden in the second painting?

The Exorcism, Artist and date unknown





Reflection Question

Both the people and the demon in the Gospel recognized that Jesus spoke with authority. What do you think it means to speak with authority? What authority does Jesus have? Why?
